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12 September 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

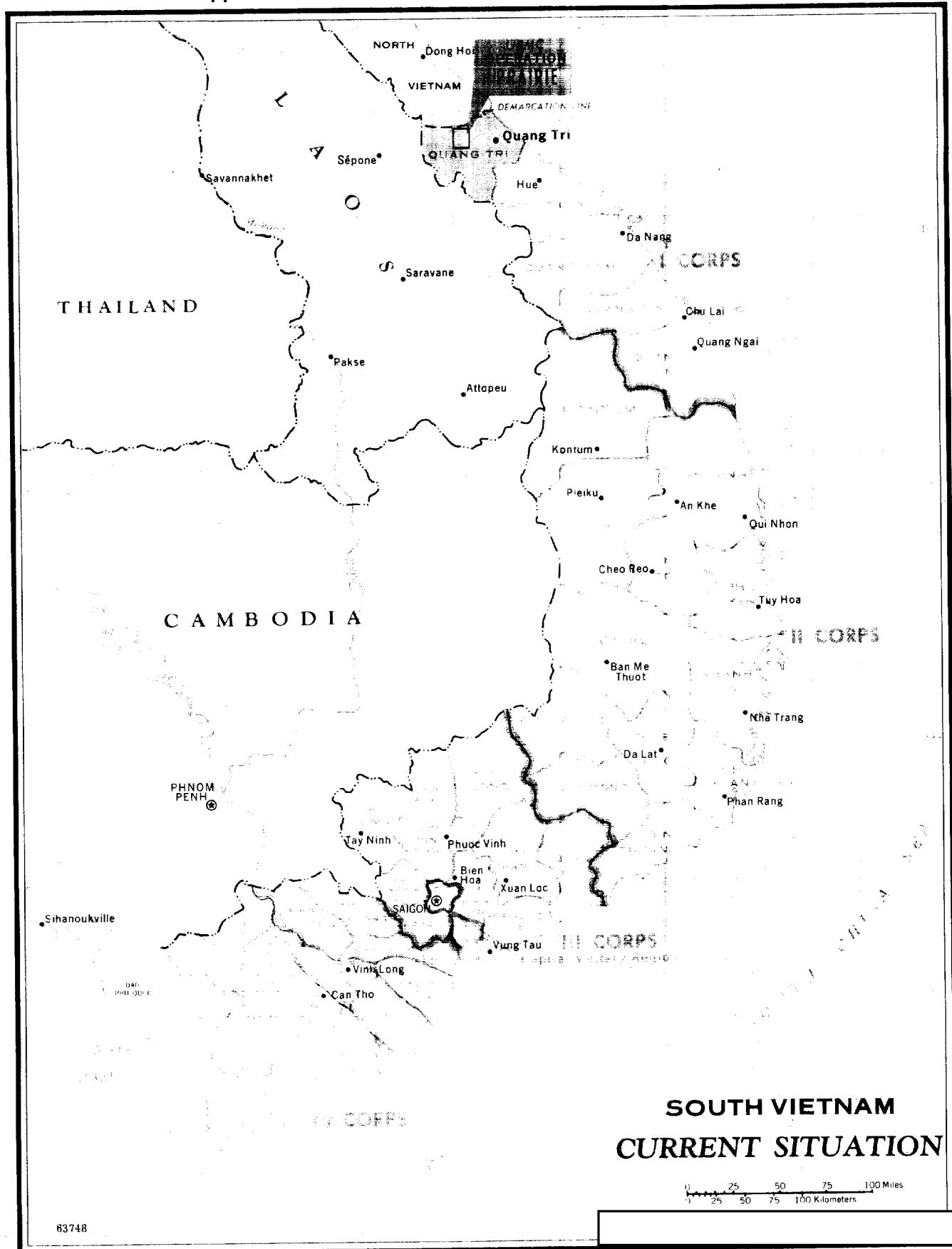
Political Developments in South Vietnam: The turnout of voters in South Vietnam yesterday was a tribute to the strength of the government and a sharp blow to Viet Cong prestige.

Using South Vietnamese Government figures, the US Embassy estimates a total turnout of about 80 percent of registered voters, with some shrinkage likely because of invalid ballots. Approximately 70 percent of registered voters in Saigon and surrounding Gia Dinh Province went to the polls, with the reported turnout considerably higher elsewhere. Despite extremely high percentages reported in some provinces, there has been no evidence of significant padding of voting totals. US observers throughout the country uniformly reported large turnouts.

The list of winning candidates is not yet complete, but does include several nationally known politicians representing the Saigon area. The large voter turnout demonstrates the government's ability to organize and carry out an election in areas under its control. The constitutional assembly selected by the voters can claim a relatively significant popular mandate in discharging its constitution drafting duties.

The failure of the Communists' open and violent campaign to disrupt the election will result in a sharp loss of face for the Viet Cong. A broadcast over the Communist "Liberation" Radio on the morning of the election had boasted that only 15 percent of those registered in Saigon would vote. Widespread terrorism on the eve of the election, with scattered incidents reported during the actual polling period yesterday, failed, however, to keep people away from the polls.

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The boycott led by the militant wing of the Buddhist Institute also proved ineffectual. Voting in strong Buddhist areas in Saigon was brisk and even included some monks from the Institute. The Buddhist stronghold of Hue in central Vietnam reported a voter turnout of nearly 86 percent.

South Vietnam Military: Military activity in South Vietnam over the weekend was limited to isolated harassing attacks by the Viet Cong and only light contact with VC/PAVN forces in the 33 ground operations currently under way.

The weekend's only significant military action occurred on 10 September when elements of an enemy force estimated to consist of 5,000 men launched a mortar attack on US Marine elements participating in Operation PRAIRIE 23 miles to the west of the capital of Quang Tri Province. Marine casualties were five killed and 11 wounded.

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Egypt: Nasir has made another attempt to improve the management of Egypt's government and troubled economy by appointing a new cabinet headed by Muhammad Sidqi Sulayman.

Sulayman, an engineer who has headed the ministry responsible for construction of the Aswan High Dam since 1962, has no independent political stature. He is a technician with a record of competence in various production, planning, and economic organizations. According to a presidential announcement, the new cabinet will focus on implementation of economic development plans. Nasir undoubtedly retains full control of internal as well as foreign policy.

Sulayman's predecessor as prime minister, Zakariya Muhi al-Din, was appointed a year ago also in the hope that he would make the government and economy more efficient. Muhi al-Din has been advocating new austerity measures and economic reforms. His removal suggests that Nasir may have rejected these recommendations because of the political risk involved and still hopes to solve Egypt's economic problems through better implementation of present, less stringent policies.

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